



'A Caring Christian Family Where We Grow Together'

24th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

'A Caring Christian Family Where We Grow Together'

Re: The Rural Church Schools Academy Trust (RCSAT) Proposed Changes for Spring 2025

As Chair of the Trust, I am writing to consult you on future changes to the Rural Schools Academy Trust. To create more opportunities and to safeguard the future of the trust financially, we are proposing that **RCSAT merges into the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) to become part of a larger school trust**. We do not foresee this will impact on the day to day running of the schools but will change the overall trust-level strategic leadership (Director/CEO level) of the 3 schools. We envisage this will be a positive move for the three schools, giving more support and opportunities to work with a larger group of primary schools in the Cheshire area.

As some of you will be aware, RCSAT was formed on 1st April 2017 by bringing together the schools of Warmingham, St Oswald's Worleston and Bunbury Aldersey together into one Trust. We are a strong Trust with three OFSTED- rated "Good" schools and a Trust with a demonstrable ability to manage schools effectively with a total focus on the wellbeing of all the pupils and staff, maximising their potential at the same time. However, as a small trust we are aware there are missed benefits that some larger trusts have, such as economies of scale and enhanced support and CPD. Therefore, as an outwardly looking trust we feel there would be great benefits in us joining another larger trust, who share the same values and approaches as us.

The directors, chair of governors and executive leadership team, have evaluated the larger local trusts in Cheshire and after discussions with the CEO and Diocesan board have decided that the Chester Diocesan Academy Trust (CDAT) is the natural choice for us to join, as a trust with similar Christian values, approach and ethos. CDAT are a primary focussed trust and currently have 17 church primary schools in Cheshire. Being part of this CDAT, rather than RCSAT, would not impact on the day to day running of the three schools, but would provide enhanced financial, operational and support services for our three schools. For further information on who CDAT are and which schools are currently in their trust please see their website

<https://www.cdat.co.uk/our-schools.html>

Next steps:

We now wish to consult with all stakeholders on this merger to hear any concerns and provide assurance of the process. The staff, governors and directors have already approved the plan. We will request that Neil Dixon, CEO of CDAT be available at some point during the consultation period to answer any questions, if necessary. After the consultation, we will then provide more information about the timescales and any practical changes. We anticipate the total process of moving RCSAT into CDAT will take approximately 9 months, therefore an indicative timeline would be looking at a change of trust in Spring 2025.

The consultation period will begin on Tuesday 24th September 2024 and end on **Tuesday 22nd October 2024**. A school spider survey has been set up to receive your feedback. The form will be issued to you electronically.

The merging of the trusts we see as a real benefit to all our schools, creating a wider trust community and giving more support to our staff and schools. Any of our directors, chair of governors or executive leadership team will be happy to discuss this merger and will make ourselves available at the schools this term. If you wish to contact me prior to the consultation, please email at chair@RCSAT.cheshire.sch.uk and I will respond within a few days.



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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Piers Bostock'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and 'B'.

Piers Bostock
Director